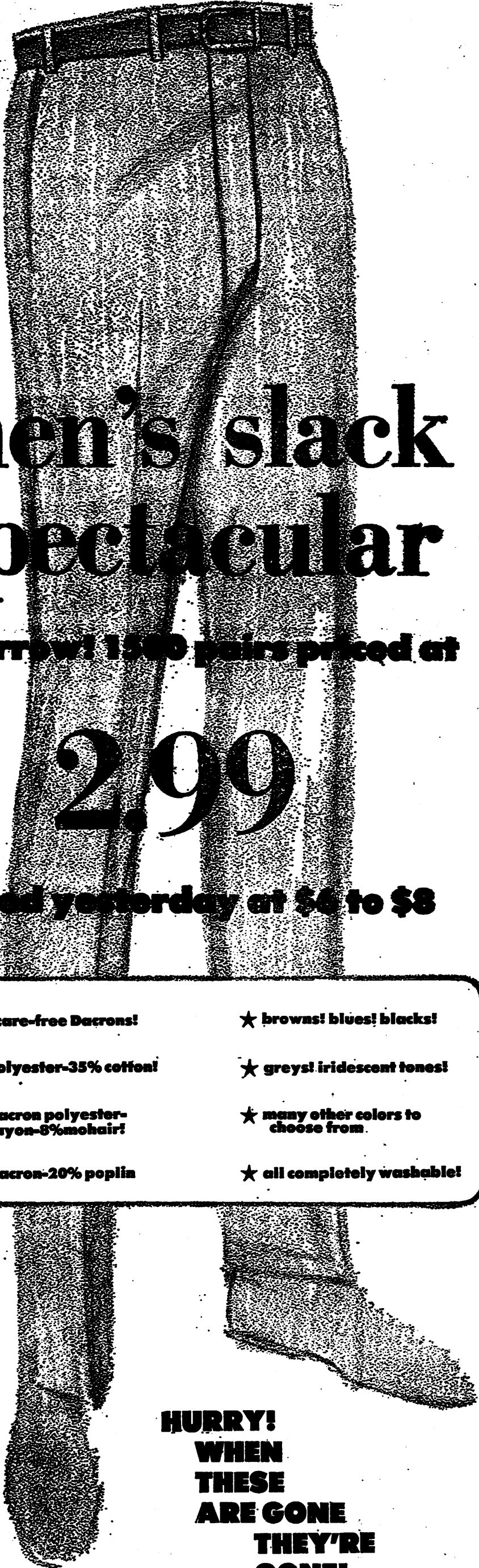




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Wide Range Of Activities Offered By Mercer County

By ARTHUR SMITH
Staff Writer

Sun-splashed greens and fairways... fishing below rippling blue water... the joy of resting under a giant shade tree... wildflowers the scent of food cooking over an open fire... and the peace and quiet of nature unpolished.

These are the gifts the Mercer County Park Commission offers county residents again this summer.

And, for those who like to be more active in their leisure, the county also serves up a wide range of athletic programs, such as baseball, softball, basketball and soccer leagues and golf and tennis tournaments.

Despite a cold and muddy

early spring, the county's fun sites already are swinging to what may prove to be record number of pleasure-seeking feet.

According to Freeholder Director Richard J. Coffee, park commission president, use of the county recreation sites has been increasing every year, and he expects another record turnout this season.

For those who like their sun and fun enjoyment on the water, the county maintains a free boat launching site on Lambert Street, Trenton just below the Marine Terminal.

The three-acre site is open during daylight hours, and includes parking for 100 cars and a serrated ramp to provide traction for automobiles pulling boat trailers out of the water. An attendant is on duty during day.

For the fisherman, picnicker and naturalist, the 250-acre John A. Roebing Memorial Park, with access from Schiller and Park Avenues in Hamilton Township, has a lot to offer.

Water, picnic tables and individual fireplaces are available, and spring-fed lakes lure the fish-happy.

Much of the park — which is open to the public from dawn to dusk — has been left in a natural state, and affords the wanderer a view of nature at its best.

For those with a historic bent, the park has the Watson House, built in 1708 and one of the two oldest houses in the county. The grounds around the house — which is now a museum and headquarters for the state chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution — were freshly landscaped this spring. The DAR started restoring the solid stone building in 1964 as its tercentenary project.

Nature lovers are flocking to Herrontown Woods Arboretum, on Snowden Lane near the junction with Herrontown Road in Princeton Township.

A number of trails wander through this 87-acre diamond in the rough, where you find many of the wildflowers, trees and animals native to New Jersey.

The Herrontown Woods Citizens Development Committee has prepared a self-guiding tour. The booklets are available at the parking lot. There also is a naturalist on duty five days a week to answer questions.

For small picnics, there is the 15-acre Belle Mountain Family Picnic area on Valley Road just off Route 29 in Hopewell Township. Fire places and picnic tables are scattered on the mountainside above an attractive small lake. It is open to the public on a first-come, first-

served basis. About a mile up the road is the county's Valley Road Group Picnic Area. This seven-acre site is available for large groups — 150 on weekends and 50 during the week — but must be reserved in advance.

The picnic area includes a small children's playground, quoit pitching area, volleyball court, outdoor fireplaces, fixed and movable picnic tables, softball field, covered cooking and eating facilities, shaded pavilion and plenty of room for parking. There also are water and toilet facilities.

If you would like to use the Valley Road group area and haven't already made a reservation, you have problems. The area is booked solid during weekends for the rest of the summer, with the exception of two Saturdays in September. But there are a few weekdays still open, according to the park secretary, Mrs. Stella Jascott.

The county also maintains a six-acre camp site known as Cedarbliss. The camp, adjacent to Washington Crossing Park in Hopewell Township, is used by Boy and Girl Scout groups, and reservations are handled by the George Washington Council of Boy Scouts.

For the athletic-minded, the county maintains a year-long schedule of sports events for young and old alike, and this year, when the first nip of cold touches the air in mid-October, the county will open its new indoor tennis center at the Mercer County Airport.

Then, when snow flies, the Belle Mountain ski run will zip into life. Last year the run had its best season, being open for skiing on 73 days.

In addition to all this, the county park commission is purchasing land for its 3,000-acre Assumpink Park in West Windsor Township and its 500-acre Stoney Brook Park in Hopewell Township. Areas in both parks should be available by next year, though it will take some time to develop the parks fully as planned.

The county also hopes eventually to purchase park land on Miry Run in Hamilton Township.

Summer Dessert

For a Summer dessert that's cool looking and easy enough even for the children to make, try enhancing ice cream by topping with various types of candy such as crushed peanut brittle, crushed pastel mints, patties or nuts.



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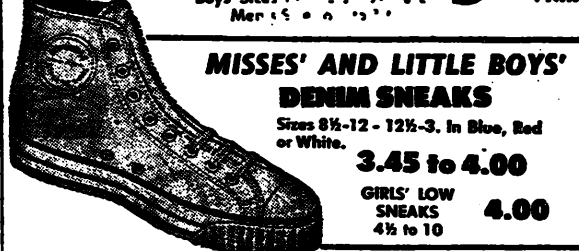
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